



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

Last week several AOT directors joined me at the Travel Industry Association's (TIA) Marketing Outlook Forum in Charlotte, North Carolina. This annual conference is the premier national conference for the travel industry's research and marketing professionals. More than 600 travel industry marketing and research leaders attended this year's forum, which is the highest attendance in the event's 33-year history. The conference focused on the current state of the U.S. travel industry, emerging consumer markets and trends, international inbound market development, and the evolving nature of the Internet and its use for online travel planning. This information was extremely beneficial to the AOT staff and we will use much of this information to help shape our future marketing campaigns to bring visitors to the Grand Canyon State.

But perhaps the biggest development resulting from the conference was the meeting with the tourism delegation from China. For the first time ever, 31 leading Chinese tourism officials met with more than three dozen U.S. state tourism directors to explore ways for the two countries to increase cooperation on travel-related matters. This is a great step toward increasing international visitation for the U.S. and Arizona. Visitation from China is expected to grow significantly over the next 10 years and it's vital to build a strong partnership with this country so we can promote Arizona as a leading vacation destination.

If you would like more information about Marketing Outlook Forum and the topics that were covered, you can visit www.tia.org

Have a great week.

Margie R. Emmert

Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

Arizona Tourism University Presents How to Develop an Interactive Marketing Strategy workshop

This dynamic workshop will present a wide range of interactive/online marketing topics in an easy to follow and practical format. Discussions will include fundamentals such as Web site basics, online advertising, e-mail campaigns, search engine optimization (SEO), measuring campaigns as well as best practices and useful interactive marketing tips. In addition, the workshop will also cover advance topics including trends in social networking, mapping, Web site analytics, user-generated content and video. To register for a workshop please contact Sarah Martins at smartins@azot.gov or by phone at 602-364-3687.

November 14, 2007
1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Hon-Dah Resort-Casino and Conference Center
777 Highway 260
Pinetop, AZ 85935

December 5, 2007
Venue to be determined

December 13, 2007
1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Cochise College Benson Campus
Room 113
1025 State Route 90
Benson, Arizona 85602

AOT Online Research Section Has Been Updated

AOT has posted the State Park Visitation for September 2007 and Year to Date on the agency's business-to-business Web site. The information is available under the Research and Statistics section of the AOT Web site, www.azot.gov.

Trippin' with AOT

AAA FAM Tour

AOT's Travel Industry Marketing division recently hosted seven AAA/CAA travel agents on a familiarization tour entitled "Gazing and Grazing." Four of the agents were from Winnipeg, Canada, two were from the Eastern United States (New Jersey and New York), and one was from Lansing, Michigan. This tour made stops in Chandler, Phoenix, Tempe, and Tucson and highlighted attractions such as the Kokopelli Winery, the Chandler Visitors Center at

McCullough-Price House, BJ's Brewery, the Chandler Fashion Center, Rawhide Wild West Town, Ocotillo Golf Resort, the Desert Botanical Gardens, the Tempe Center for the Arts, Tohono Chul Park and Kitt Peak National Observatory. If you would like additional information, please contact Kristy Swanson at 602-364-3696 or via e-mail at kswanson@azot.gov.

Geotourism Press Trip

AOT recently took a group of nine travel writers on a five-day tour of southeastern Arizona for the Geotourism Press Trip. Representing five different countries including the U.S., the UK, Mexico, Germany and Canada, this group of established travel writers were treated to a uniquely Arizona experience as they visited attractions listed on National Geographic's Arizona-Sonora Geotourism Map Guide. National Geographic defines Geotourism as "tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place - its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents." Some of the trips highlights included wine-tasting in Elgin, a mine tour in Bisbee, a gun-fight in Tombstone and fine Southwestern dining in Tucson. *National Geographic Kids* (UK), *Travel Agent Magazine* and *Reforma*, Mexico's largest daily newspaper, were among the prestigious publications represented on this trip. All together, these nine writers represented 13 publications with a combined circulation of nearly two million readers. If you would like additional information please contact Erica Rich at 602-364-3698 or via e-mail at erich@azot.gov.

Industry News

Disney Crafts Film to Welcome Foreign Visitors

Walt Disney Co. has produced a new seven-minute film to welcome inbound tourists and help counteract the image abroad of post-9/11 America as hostile to foreign visitors. The feel-good "Welcome: Portraits of America" will play for visitors as they wait for visa processing at 219 consular offices or in the foreign-flight arrival areas of U.S. airports. Some 43 million foreigners apply for U.S. visas or go through customs each year. Disney, long active in lobbying for more welcoming treatment of foreign visitors, made the film at no cost to the government. Like others in the travel industry, Disney has expressed concern about the nation's declining share of international travelers. The film, which uses ordinary Americans, depicts the U.S. as a friendly place to visit by showing smiling, waving Americans of all ages and races. (*Page 1B, USA Today*)

SAVE the DATE: Second Annual Tourism Safety and Security Conference Nov. 8, 2007

The Second Annual Tourism Safety and Security Conference will be held at the Hilton Scottsdale Resort and Villas, Thursday, November 8, 2007 from 8am to 5pm. This conference will bring together public safety officials and tourism industry professionals to make both sides aware of the safety and security issues related to tourism and the advantages of cooperation and collaboration. The opening session is a panel of experts lead by Brady Castro, VP of the Arizona Super Bowl Host Committee who will describe the Super Bowl XLII planning process. Cam Hunter, Bureau Chief, Emergency Preparedness and Response Arizona Department of Health Services will discuss "Pandemic: Issues for Guests, Future guests and Employees." At the Luncheon, Leesa Morrison, Director, Arizona Office of Homeland Security will describe "The State Of Arizona's Preparedness." Bruce MacMillan, CEO, Meeting Professionals International will discuss Security Planning for the Global Meeting Industry. Register at <http://mtrc.asu.edu/web/aztss>. Contact Jim Fausel (602 496 0161) or jim.fausel@asu.edu for more details.

The Upside of the Down Dollar

The dollar may be down in value against the euro and the British pound, but that could present big opportunities for the U.S. travel industry, a leading economist said Tuesday. John Walker, chairman and chief economist for Oxford Economics, London, told the Travel Industry Association's Marketing Outlook Forum in Charlotte there's plenty of upside for U.S. inbound travel. (See related story below). "America is on sale" because of the currency exchange rate. "Everything in the U.S. is cheaper-and that should encourage more (international) travel to the U.S. Americans may forgo trips to London or Paris and choose instead to go to Boston or Charlotte, he said. The U.S. should also benefit from strong growth in travel in the rest of the world, particularly Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific region. Yet, there are risks for the U.S. travel industry. The housing market is down sharply and there's no significant recovery in sight for the next six months. Consumer spending is down but consumer confidence is holding up reasonably well, Walker said. Business travel is encouraging except for those in financial services. Also at TIA,. Roger Dow, TIA president and CEO, updated attendees on the Travel Promotion Act of 2007, a proposed \$200 million public and private initiative to spur inbound travel and help project a more favorable image of travel to America. Dow said the legislation now has 100 co-sponsors in the House and 20 in the Senate. He also previewed a new Commerce Department Web site that will launch in March in the U.S., Canada, Mexico and Germany. The three-day conference, which sold out with 600 registrants, closes today. *(A TA special report)*